

Child Support Collection

January 2005

Why is child support important to the WorkFirst program?

Parents are legally obligated to support their children financially. When a family is separated, the non-custodial parent pays child support, so that the custodial parent does not have to rely on welfare and can seek employment or training to avoid poverty. The Division of Child Support within the Department of Social and Health Services enforces state and federal child support laws enabling these families and children to remain self-sufficient.

Who is eligible for services?

WorkFirst and Medicaid families automatically receive child support services. All other families may apply for and receive services.

What services are available?

- **Location of non-custodial parents:** Locates parents who owe child support through shared federal and state data bases and other sources.
- **Paternity and support order establishment:** Establishes paternity through programs with hospitals and county prosecutors and child support orders through either administrative or judicial processes.
- **Medical support establishment:** Establishes medical insurance coverage for children, if available through a parent's employer or union at a reasonable cost.
- **Monitor and enforce child support orders:** Monitors payments and enforces current and past due child support orders through administrative and judicial activity and other initiatives like the "Most Wanted" website.
- **Tribal support services:** Promotes tribal agreements to establish and enforce child support for tribal members.

What are the benefits to taxpayers for custodial parents who receive regular child support payments?

Each month, parents use:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------|
| • Up to 75 percent less welfare | \$1.7 million |
| • Less Medicaid | \$4.5 million |
| • Less food assistance | \$1.1 million |

Total cost savings to taxpayers per month = \$7.3 million

For more information about the Child Support program, visit <http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/dcs>

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WorkFirst

Last year, the Division of Child Support:

- Collected more than \$318 million for current or former WorkFirst parents.
- Handled more than 224,000 WorkFirst cases per month.
- Served more than 420,000 children each month.
- Brought in more federal dollars than it spent. Through 66 percent federal funding and additional federal incentives for high performance, plus the recovered and retained TANF collections, the program returned a profit to the state.

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For more information about the WorkFirst program, visit www.workfirst.wa.gov

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